

What Can I Do About My Child's Picky Eating Habits?

It is not uncommon for young children to refuse to eat the foods prepared for them. One way that children learn to be independent is by making decisions about which foods they will eat. Parents often become frustrated by this behavior as it thwarts their efforts to provide nutritious meals that promote healthy development and energy levels. While parents are encouraged to continue preparing three balanced meals a day, most toddlers will only eat two full meals a day. It's important that parents not force children to eat foods that they have expressed a dislike for and should avoid using food as a reward for good behavior as well as a punishment.

In order to promote positive eating habits, parents are encouraged to associate eating with being at the table for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Mealtime conversation should remain pleasant. Parents are encouraged to avoid commenting on their child's poor eating habits while at the table. Although parents may want to avoid confrontation during mealtime by preparing an alternative meal, this should be avoided as it will only cause problems later. Parents should also introduce new foods in small amounts, keeping in mind that your child may be hesitant to try something new or unfamiliar. Snacks are also an important part of your child's day. Parents should limit snacks between meals so that children are hungry when mealtime rolls around. Although sometimes worrisome, following these few tips will help make mealtime enjoyable for the whole family.